

Nation's debt. The lesson is that the greatest debt-and-deficit reduction tool is job creation. That is why the super-committee must include significant job creation components in its recommendations.

Let me add, Mr. Speaker, that our infrastructure is sorely in need of massive investment. Our roads, bridges, airports, energy grid, and water infrastructure are all in horrible condition. The World Economic Forum ranks America 23rd in infrastructure quality. The American Society of Civil Engineers gives our infrastructure a D grade. Transportation for America reports that there are 63,000 structurally deficient bridges in our country—including 99 in my community in western New York. The Chamber of Commerce has said that unless we repair our infrastructure, we will suffer \$336 billion in lost growth over the next 5 years.

To my colleagues who believe that we can't afford to make investments at this time, I say we can't afford not to. Delaying the repair or replacement of infrastructure by just 2 years can increase the cost of doing those repairs by a factor of five.

I also note that we just spent \$62 billion nation-building in Iraq and \$73 billion nation-building in Afghanistan. There was no objection then to borrowing to finance that nation-building, nor should there be objection now when we're proposing to do nation-building right here at home.

And given the current economic conditions, financing American infrastructure projects will never be cheaper. Interest rates are extremely low, the cost of labor and materials are low due to lack of demand, and the equipment is cheap because it is idle. Repairing and expanding our infrastructure is work that we need to do to stay globally competitive, and it will never be cheaper to do it than it is today. Quite simply, there is much work to be done, and a lot of Americans need to do work. Now is the best time to do that.

Mr. Speaker, a large scale, \$1.2 trillion, 5-year investment in infrastructure would create 27 million American jobs that cannot be shipped overseas. It will reduce unemployment, it will reduce the deficit and, in the end, we will have an infrastructure our country needs and our country deserves.

PANCREATIC CANCER RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEEHAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 733, the Pancreatic Cancer Research Education Act. Oftentimes, we talk about numbers, Mr. Speaker, but often there's the occasion to actually talk to the people who are behind the bills. One of the most moving experiences I have had is to have had a visit to my office by a young woman by the name of Sienna

Gonzalez, who visited with her mother and her family. You see, Sienna's mother is a victim of pancreatic cancer; and Sienna is on a mission, along with many of her friends, to help people fight to find a cure for pancreatic cancer.

She took a lead by urging so many of her friends and colleagues in her classroom, and I hold in my hand just one of the volumes of hundreds upon hundreds of letters that came and were so moving.

The facts speak for themselves: 43,000 Americans will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer; 36,000 will die just this year; and the life expectancy after announcement of that is about 3 to 6 months. I think the words are better said, however, by some of the students.

People are losing a lot of friends and family, writes Aly, because of this horrible, horrifying disease. We are trying to help. Did you know that this disease is one of the few cancers for which survival has not improved substantially? In over 40 years, survival rates have not changed. The average life span after diagnosis is 3 to 6 months. Please use more of your research money to help these people if you can. Thank you.

That's just one of the hundreds of letters.

I want to express my deep appreciation of Dr. Timothy Quinn, the superintendent of the Methacton School District; Mrs. Melissa Gora, the principal; but, mostly, the hundreds and hundreds of students who have taken the time to ensure that their voices are heard. As they said: pancreatic cancer: know it, fight it, end it.

Thank you for your role in making sure that my colleagues understand the importance of this great challenge and the opportunity that we have to fight for those with pancreatic cancer.

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FIRST TROOP PHILADELPHIA CITY CAVALRY'S 237TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the First Troop Philadelphia City Cavalry on the occasion of their 237th anniversary. This volunteer cavalry troop was the first of its kind organized in the defense of our country during the American Revolution. Through those hard-fought years is where the original members forged concepts of service and a body of tradition which is kept alive today by its current members.

The First Troop Cavalry is a private military organization whose membership is comprised of members of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard who serve with A Troop 1st Squadron, 104th Cavalry in the 28th Infantry Division. Many of their members have served overseas, including Afghanistan and Iraq. Their service to our country is immeasurable, and we should all be extremely thankful.

POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise again to really beat the drum about the ongoing crisis of poverty and unemployment in America.

On November 6, the Associated Press reported that we have crossed a terrible threshold. More job seekers now in America have run out of unemployment benefits than are receiving them. Simply put, the majority of Americans who are struggling to find a job are no longer getting unemployment benefits.

We need to extend unemployment benefits and we need to do it now, not just for those who are about to run out, but for the millions of Americans whose benefits ran out a long time ago—the millions who ran out of time to establish their careers, the millions who ran out of time to safeguard their families' futures, and the millions who ran out of time to ignite the fires of the American Dream.

Congressman BOBBY SCOTT and I have a bill, H.R. 589, which will give millions of families just a little more time to find a good job, to make a secure home, and would provide a bridge over troubled waters while our Nation and the economy recovers.

Extending benefits for the 99ers is the right thing to do for millions of Americans who were laid off through no fault of their own. They watched as corporations took over their government and ran the economy into the ground. They watched as the banks raided the Nation's treasury and lined their pockets with massive bonuses while millions of Americans lost their jobs. They watched as our Nation's future was traded away for needless wars and tax cuts for billionaires.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are sick and tired. They don't want to watch anymore. They don't want to wait anymore. They have run out of time.

Nearly 50 million Americans are already living in poverty, struggling to feed their families and keep a roof over their heads. Countless millions more are living on the edge. They are desperately trying to stay one step ahead of disaster, living from paycheck to paycheck and waiting for the other shoe to drop.

The American people really have run out of patience. They don't want to hear that the most powerful nation in the world is broke. They don't believe it when they are told that we can't afford Medicare or Medicaid or Social Security or unemployment benefits when we are spending \$1 trillion on wars halfway around the world. They don't want to hear empty promises from Republicans in Congress about taking responsibility to ensure that the poor in America have "food in their stomachs and they have a roof over their head,"

even while they pass bills that slash affordable housing programs and cut nutrition funding for women and children, a program which is very important.

Americans know that the rich should pay their fair share and that working men and women of America deserve more. They don't want this generation to be the first generation of Americans who won't do better than the last one. Americans want to move ahead, and they want those who have benefited the most from our economy to pay what they owe to the 99 percent of the American people who are the real engines of our economy and the heart of our democracy. The generation that is marching in the streets right now is asking what went wrong in the pursuit of the American Dream.

So let's pass H.R. 589 and give Americans a little more time to land that job that gets their family back on their feet. You know, when you run out of unemployment benefits after 99 weeks, that's it. That's it. So we must extend unemployment benefits, but we also need to extend, as our bill says, at least an additional 14 weeks so that those who have hit the 99-week wall have some form of survival until we can figure out a way to create jobs.

So we must pass the American Jobs Act to reinvest in the future of this country and build up our roads and bridges, repair our sewer lines, and build 21st century schools for all of our students.

Let's put America back on track with American jobs, American manufacturing, American ingenuity, and American leadership toward a brighter tomorrow for all Americans.

We must build these ladders of opportunity. We have to remove these barriers and obstacles. And let me tell you, not having a job is a huge barrier and a huge obstacle to reigniting the American Dream.

And so we must extend unemployment benefits, but we must not forget that there are those who have had 99 weeks who are no longer even eligible for unemployment benefits. And as the AP article says, we now have over 2 million people who won't even be eligible for unemployment compensation. That's 2.2 million people that won't even be eligible even if we extend unemployment benefits.

So let's work to try to figure out how to, one, create jobs, but to provide some safety net for those who really do want to work. And people want to work.

[From the Associated Press, Nov. 6, 2011]

MOST UNEMPLOYED AMERICANS ARE NO LONGER RECEIVING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

WASHINGTON, DC.—The jobs crisis has left so many people out of work for so long that most of America's unemployed are no longer receiving unemployment benefits.

Early last year, 75 percent were receiving checks. The figure is now 48 percent—a shift that points to a growing crisis of long-term unemployment. Nearly one-third of America's 14 million unemployed have had no job for a year or more.

Congress is expected to decide by year's end whether to continue providing emergency unemployment benefits for up to 99 weeks in the hardest-hit states. If the emergency benefits expire, the proportion of the unemployed receiving aid would fall further.

The ranks of the poor would also rise. The Census Bureau says unemployment benefits kept 3.2 million people from slipping into poverty last year. It defines poverty as annual income below \$22,314 for a family of four.

Yet for a growing share of the unemployed, a vote in Congress to extend the benefits to 99 weeks is irrelevant. They've had no job for more than 99 weeks. They're no longer eligible for benefits.

Their options include food stamps or other social programs. Nearly 46 million people received food stamps in August, a record total. That figure could grow as more people lose unemployment benefits.

So could the government's disability rolls. Applications for the disability insurance program have jumped about 50 percent since 2007.

"There's going to be increased hardship," said Wayne Vroman, an economist at the Urban Institute.

The number of unemployed has been roughly stable this year. Yet the number receiving benefits has plunged 30 percent.

Government unemployment benefits weren't designed to sustain people for long stretches without work. They usually don't have to. In the recoveries from the previous three recessions, the longest average duration of unemployment was 21 weeks, in July 1983.

By contrast, in the wake of the Great Recession, the figure reached 41 weeks in September. That's the longest on records dating to 1948. The figure is now 39 weeks.

"It was a good safety net for a shorter recession," said Carl Van Horn, an economist at Rutgers University. It assumes "the economy will experience short interruptions and then go back to normal."

Weekly unemployment checks average about \$300 nationwide. If the extended benefits aren't renewed, growth could slow by up to a half-percentage point next year, economists say.

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that each \$1 spent on unemployment benefits generates up to \$1.90 in economic growth. The CBO has found that the program is the most effective government policy for increasing growth among 11 options it's analyzed.

Jon Polis lives in East Greenwich, R.I., one of the 20 states where 99 weeks of benefits are available. He used them all up after losing his job as a warehouse worker in 2008. His benefits paid for groceries, car maintenance and health insurance.

Now, Polis, 55, receives disability insurance payments, food stamps and lives in government-subsidized housing. He's been unable to find work because employers in his field want computer skills he doesn't have.

"Employers are crying that they can't find qualified help," he said. But the ones he interviewed with "weren't willing to train anybody."

From late 2007, when the recession began, to early 2010, the number of people receiving unemployment benefits rose more than fourfold, to 11.5 million.

But the economy has remained so weak that an analysis of long-term unemployment data suggests that about 2 million people have used up 99 weeks of checks and still can't find work.

Contributing to the smaller share of the unemployed who are receiving benefits: Some of them are college graduates or others seeking jobs for the first time. They aren't

eligible. Only those who have lost a job through no fault of their own qualify.

The proportion of the unemployed receiving benefits usually falls below 50 percent during an economic recovery. Many have either quit jobs or are new to the job market and don't qualify.

Today, the proportion is falling for a very different reason: Jobs remain scarce. So more of the unemployed are exhausting their benefits.

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke has noted that the long-term unemployed increasingly find it hard to find work as their skills and professional networks erode. In a speech last month, Bernanke called long-term unemployment a "national crisis" that should be a top priority for Congress.

Lawmakers will have to decide whether to continue the extended benefits by the end of this year. If the program ends, nearly 2.2 million people will be cut off by February.

Congress has extended the program nine times. But it might balk at the \$45 billion cost. It will be the first time the Republican-led House will vote on the issue.

BRING OUR TROOPS HOME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

I again will keep coming to the floor twice a week when we're in session to talk about bringing our troops out of Afghanistan. Bin Laden is dead, and we need to start thinking about, as the lady said before me, let's think about what America needs and not what Afghanistan needs. And that brings me to this point of the talk I want to give today, Mr. Speaker.

On February 16, 2011, then-Secretary of Defense Gates testified before the House Armed Services Committee, which I serve on, and I'd like to read his comments:

"By the end of this calendar year, we expect less than 100,000 troops to be deployed in both of the major post-9/11 combat theaters, virtually all of those forces being in Afghanistan. That is why we believe that, beginning in fiscal year 2015"—and that's important, Mr. Speaker. "That is why we believe that, beginning in fiscal year 2015, the United States can, with minimal risk, begin reducing Army active duty end strength by 27,000 and the Marine Corps by somewhere between 15,000 and 20,000. These projections assume that the number of troops in Afghanistan would be significantly reduced by the end of 2014, in accordance with the President's strategy."

Mr. Speaker, I read that because I read the same statement to the new Secretary of Defense, Mr. Panetta, whom I have great respect for, and I asked him, Do you have the authority to change those timelines? He said no, because this is what the President has agreed to.

Well, Mr. President, I'm calling on you to reconsider. Because beside me is a poster, and beside that poster is a flag-draped coffin coming off of a plane at Dover. And the headlines in the